1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

CHAPTER II

CULTURE, TRIBE, SOCIETY

000 THE description of environment is concerned with a solid, easily defined, almost self-evident reality. A description of the general demographic and cultural constellation deals with the fluid entity of groups and systems of unity, the mere circumscription of which involves already theoretical definitions and classifications. These definitions and classifications must be based on facts which only the full analysis of the society can establish. This chapter will thus have to anticipate certain results of the general description which forms the main body of this book. It will not attempt to anticipate the descriptions themselves. Its aim is only to sketch in a background, to stake out a field of demographic and cultural facts by which is bounded that social reality with which this book is dealing.

PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION

101 Let me draw a tribal map of the part of Nigeria where Nupe country lies: in the north the neighbours of the Nupe are Kamberi, Kamuku, and Hausa; in north-east and east lies Gbari country; in the south, on the river, the country of the Kakanda; and west of the river, Yagba (a section of the Yoruba) and Ilorin Yoruba; and in the north-west, finally, the people of Borgu and Bussa. Colonies of Nupe, small sections, split off from the main body of the tribe, are scattered all over Nigeria, especially in villages and towns on the Niger. The largest of them, a group of about 15,000 people who call themselves Bassa, or Bassa Nge, lives near the confluence of Niger and Benue. They appear to have emigrated from the mother country about a hundred years ago, before the Fulani conquest; they settled first on the right bank of the Niger, on the hills of what is to-day Lokoja, and moved later, when the new town of Lokoja was founded by the Niger Company, to the left bank where they are living to-day.

The Nupe are known as *Nufawa* (sing. *Nufe*) among the Hausa, as *Abawa* (sing. *Bawa*) among the Gbari of Kuta, and as *Anupeyi* and *Anufawhei* among the Gbari of Paiko and Birnin Gwari; the Yoruba know them as *Takpa* and the Kakanda as *Anupecwayi*. The Nupe call themselves *Nupeci* or, in the plural, *Nupeciši*, their language *Nupe*, and their country *kin Nupe*, Land of Nupe. No special word for 'tribe' exists in Nupe; the Nupe speak of *za Nupe*, Nupe man, Nupe peoples.

619 This book is concerned with the culture of the people that calls itself Nupe. But what does 'people' mean here? What is the social reality to which the term Nupe people or Nupe tribe refers? The three meanings of *Nupe*, people, language, and country, do not coincide. Disregarding the split-off sections we may say that the Nupe tribe inhabits, roughly, the same territory. But it is not, and never was, 'one country' in the sense of a group united politically, or by facts of close contact and 'common life', thus marked off from other, similar areas or groups. Of

THE NUPE

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

105 The Nupe, speaking a number of related dialects, number about 360,000, and consist of the inhabitants of Bida Emirate, Niger Province, together with several politically separate sections. They do not form a territorially united group and, although every Nupe should extend hospitality to his fellow-tribesmen, they are not characterized by close internal cohesion. There is considerable variety of custom among the various "sub-tribes." Outstanding common features are: the cycle of myths of the culture-hero Tsoede, the observation of the *gunnu* ritual, belief in the supreme sky-god Soko, and the general structure of political ranks, age-sets, kinship system, and marriage rules.[1]

NOMENCLATURE

101 The Nupe call themselves *Nupeciši* or *Nupenciši* (sing. *Nupeci* or *Nupenci*), their language *Nupe* or *Esi Nupe*, and their country *Kin Nupe* ("the land of Nupe"). But Nupe in Zugurma and, generally speaking, north of the Kaduna River, also call themselves *Agabi*.[2] They are known by neighbouring tribes by the following names:[3]

By the Hausa: *Ba Nupe* or *Nufawa* (sing. *Nufe*).
" " Gbari of Kuta: *Abawa* (sing. *Bawa*).[4]
" " Gbari of Paiko and Birnin Gwari: *Ampeyi* or *Nife*.
" " Akanda (Yoruba): *Anupecwayi*.
" " Yoruba, Kambali, and Fon: *Takpa* or *Tapa* (*Tappah*).
" " Ijumu (Yoruba) and Igbira: *Anupe*.
" " Ebe (Nupe sub-tribe): *Anuperi*.
" " Lopawa: *Duma*.

LOCATION

131 The Nupe live in the low basin formed by the valleys of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers, between 9° 30′ and 8° 30′ north, in an area roughly 7,000 square miles in extent. Their northern boundary runs from Share (Tsaragi) to the Niger south of Baro; the western boundary is the Niger from Leaba to Jebba and south to Share; the eastern boundary is the line of the foothills east of Lapai and Gidi. Small sections of the Nupe are also scattered through Nigeria, especially in villages and towns on the Niger. The largest of these groups is that of the Basa or Basa Nge, in the north-west of Igala Division of Kabba Province opposite Lokoja.

131 The Nupe form the great majority of the population in the Bida and Agaie 167 Emirates of Niger Province, and in the Pategi-Lafiagi Emirate of Ilorin Province. There are also Nupe in the north-east of Ilorin and in the south of Borgu Emirate. They form a compact minority of the population in other chieftainships and political districts under the authority of Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbira chiefs, as follows: around Zugurma in the Kontagora Division of Niger Province, under the Hausa Emir of Kontagora; in Shona and Share Districts of Ilorin Province, under the

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 12–26; 1935a, pp. 278–9; Meek, 1925, Vol. I, p. 24. Thanks to the publications of Professor S. F. Nadel, based on intensive fieldwork in Bida Emirate and elsewhere in the thirties, it is possible to treat many aspects of Nupe culture and social organization more systematically and also more briefly than is the case for most of the peoples of the Niger-Benue confluence.
[2] Mathews, 1926.
[3] Nadel, 1942, p. 12; Temple, 1919, p. 282 and index.
[4] The Ebe sub-tribe is also called Abewa by Hausa speakers.

[pp. 1-16 Non-existent]

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

131 167 Fulani-Yoruba Emir of Ilorin; in Eggan District, Koton Karifi Division, Kabba Province, under the *Ata* of Igbira.[5]

NEIGHBOURING TRIBES

701 Neighbours of the Nupe to the west are Fulani and Ilorin Yoruba; to the east and north-east, Gbari, Basa, and Igbira; to the north, Kamberi, Kamuku, and Hausa; to the south, Yoruba (Ilorin, Yagba, Bunu, and Aworo); to the north-west, Bussawa and Borgawa.

NUPE SUB-TRIBES[6]

619 634 [167] Nupe sub-tribes are both territorial and cultural entities, each speaking its own dialect and often united by a network of kinship ties and a belief in common descent. But a great deal of migration has taken and still takes place between one sub-tribe and another. Some other peoples, such as the Kakanda, are in the process of being assimilated as Nupe sub-tribes.

Beni (Bini): one of the "original" Nupe sub-tribes which, together with Kyedye and Bataci, forms the nucleus of the Nupe kingdom. Traditionally Beni became a political unit when the 12 towns of the Beni confederacy recognized the supremacy of one of their number and gave allegiance and tribute to its chief; they were bound to fight together and support each other in times of war. The 12 towns share common insignia, a common mythology, and a specialized form of the *gunnu* cult. To-day the Beni are concentrated mainly in and around Bida, Kutigi, and Lemu, but there are a few living near the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They have a high reputation as farmers and craftsmen.

Bataci (Batachi, Bataciži): also an "original" sub-tribe, coming under the local overlordship of the Kyedye. They are considered to be the original inhabitants of the riverain area and live on the pools and backwaters of the lower reaches of the Niger.

Kyedye (Kede): a term often used for all canoe- and fishermen on the river, referring specifically to a group known as *Eyapaciži* ("canoe-men"). They in turn refer to all other groups of Nupe collectively as *Laiciži* ("farmers"), and call the non-Kyedye sub-tribes *Kintsoži* ("owners of the land," i.e., original inhabitants). The Kyedye had established themselves on the Kaduna River and on Jebba Island about 40 years ago. The emergence of this sub-tribe consisted in the growth of a colonizing and dominating group, expanding from Muregi at the confluence of the Niger and Kaduna,[7] and although they form a minority in the area they have established themselves as local rulers over the Bataci.

The Kyedye do not intermarry with Bataci and other sub-tribes but, on the contrary, stress a sharp tribal and cultural division. They are the only purely riverain Nupe sub-tribe and are said to "rule the water." They are to be found mainly on the left bank of the Niger and on the Kaduna River, in the Bida, Agaie, Lapai, and Kontagora Emirates of Niger Province. Others are on the right bank of the Niger in the Ilorin, Lafiagi, and Pategi Emirates of Ilorin Province, and in the Koton Karifi Division of Kabba Province. There are 10 main villages, Muregi being the only purely Kyedye settlement; all the others are built on sites of "native" villages. Another small group lives at Onitsha as canoe builders, and there is a large and prosperous colony at Lokoja.

They are divided into two sections, of which one, Kyedye Tifin or Gbede,[8] a semi-riverain group upstream from Jebba Island, is subject to the other, Kyedye Tako,[9] who live downstream.

[5] Nadel, 1942, p. 13; 1937b, p. 424.
[6] Nadel, 1942, pp. 19–26; 1935a, pp. 258–9, 237, 275; 1940a, pp. 164–71.
[7] According to Nadel, this colonization is still going on.
[8] The main Kyedye Tifin villages are: Muregi, Cegu, Leaba, Shankyedye, Yankyedye, Sambo, Sonka, Egwa, Basumagi, Buka, Bele.
[9] The main Kyedye Tako villages are: Kpakefu, Ogudu, Ketsogi, Lepkata, Endorigi, Ela, Difa, Gbaradozi, Dokomba, Kpatagba, Kacha Wunengi, Gungi, Etsumutum, Gidi.

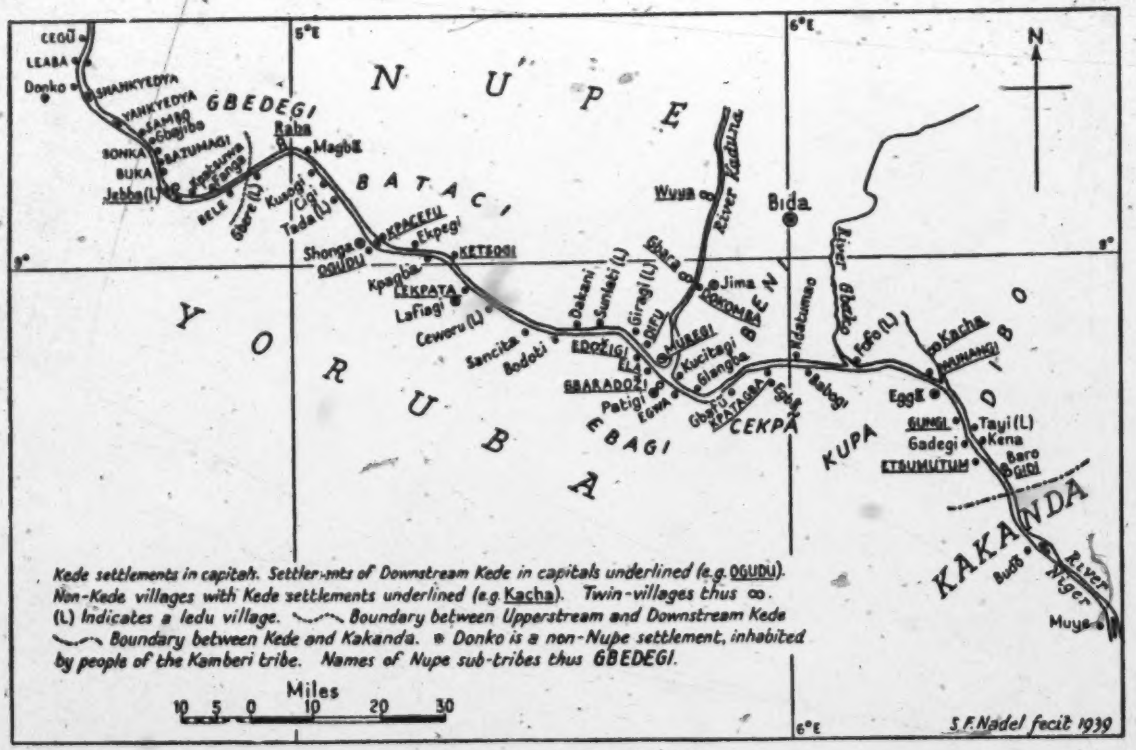
NUPE.

AUTHORITIES:

Mr. T. A. G. Budgen. Mr. E. C. Duff.
Mr. E. G. M. Dupigny.

131 The Nupe people are distributed over the southern part
771 of the Protectorate in clans that have little connection with each other. Probably nearly half are pagans practising different forms of religion, the remainder are Muhammadans. The Niger Province is the headquarters of the tribe, who are to be found in their greatest numbers in the vicinity of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They claim to be indigenous, but some authorities
173 trace a connection between them and the Gabi, erstwhile inhabitants of Egypt. There is a legend to the effect that a certain stranger, a hunter, called Abduazizi, travelling from the east, arrived with his family at the town of Doko Daji, where he settled amongst the Bini. He was given the title of Nefiu, the Arabic word for fugitive, whence arises the corruption Nufe, Nupe. It is also asserted that Nupe is not so much the name
● 108 of a tribe as of a language, and that it may well be that the new
197 comers adopted the speech of the older inhabitants, the Gwari or Gbari, between which and Nupe there are now only

5. Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede



THE COUNTRY OF THE KEDE

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
FF52 Nupe FF52
Kede

beside fishing and canoeing. Their villages and hamlets are scattered between the Kede settlements all along the river banks.[1] The sharp division, cultural and tribal, between the Kede and the other semi-riverain groups is illustrated in the linguistic usage: for Kede the word *eyapaciʒi* (canoemen), is used almost synonymously, while the other groups are referred to, collectively, as *laticiʒi* (farmers). Tradition, too, has its contribution to make: it represents the Kede as alien immigrants who have come from outside into their present habitat and settled there among the 'aboriginal' population. This tradition (to which we shall return later) is again reflected in linguistic usage, the different semi-riverain groups which to-day are the neighbours of the Kede in the river valley being spoken of, collectively, as *kintsoʒi* (owners of the land—that is, original inhabitants).

We possess detailed population figures only for one part of Kede country, for what is to-day the Kede District of Bida Emirate. But we may take these figures as representative of the whole area inhabited by the Kede.[2] In a total population of 12,066, the Kede number 2,225, and the *kintsoʒi* (comprising various sub-tribes) 9,742, the small rest (99) being made up by non-Nupe strangers who live in Kede District. The Kede thus form a minority in their own country—the country which bears their name. But it rightly bears their name and rightly is called 'their' country, for the Kede minority represents the ruling group, and their chief the ruler of this whole territory and the different groups which inhabit it, Kede as well as non-Kede.

But Kede country is itself part of a larger political system, the Nupe Emirate. In pre-British times, the country of the Kede lay almost entirely on Nupe territory or, more correctly, on the territory ruled by the *Etsu* (king) of Nupe, under whom it enjoyed the status of a semi-autonomous, vassal State. Under British administration, Kede country, greatly affected by the re-alignment of the

[1] They comprise sections of the following Nupe sub-tribes: the Gbedegi on the upper stretch of the Niger; the Bataci, or Marsh Dwellers, on the lower reaches; a few groups of Beni near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna; the Kupa round Eggan in the south; Dibo or ʒitako near Katcha and Baro; and, finally, a group of Nupe from Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom, on the Kaduna and on the Niger near Patigi.

[2] These figures are taken from an official, unpublished, provincial census, for the use of which I am greatly indebted to the Administration of Niger Province. While the figures are perhaps not correct in every detail, they are reliable enough for the purpose of this argument.